The pie chart shows eight segments labeled: Teacher Education Programs; Policies and Plans; Standards, Assessments, and Accountability; Funding Resources, and Time; Training and Professional Development; Advisory Committee; Youth Voice; and a large exploded segment labeled **COLLABORATION**.

- **Work collaboratively with community partners and national service providers, such as AmeriCorps and VISTA, to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clear, service is meaningful, and all partners are committed to success.**

DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS IS ESSENTIAL TO infuse service-learning fully into the school culture. These partnerships between schools and their communities must be collaborative and focus on the common goals of expanding learning opportunities for youth while addressing community needs.

> *"It is not possible to have genuine collaboration if one or more of the partners perceive themselves to be a 'junior partner.'"*

Gary Hart
California Secretary of Education

Establish Partnerships with the Community

Collaboration can be difficult, especially with entities that operate very differently. Schools tend to be structured with established policies and procedures, while many community agencies and businesses are more flexible. Collaboration forces people to view issues from a new perspective. Each partner must continually take the other into consideration and not merely "use" the partner to provide a funding source or to fulfill only one partner's objective. The partnership must be based on a "handshake, not a handout."

Sending inadequately prepared students into the community to do service would be a disservice to both the community and students. Having students engage in service that is not meaningful to them is also unfair. Careful collaboration and training for staff members from schools and agencies can lay the foundation for a situation in which everyone wins.

As enthusiasm for service-learning grows and more educators become involved, the need for coordination within a school and across the schools in a district also grows. Essential partners can be overwhelmed when persons from several different schools contact them to become involved in similar activities. Many community agencies are understaffed and underfunded, so while they may want to collaborate, they must do so in the most efficient way. Staff members must be designated to facilitate the day-to-day process of linking schools and the community. The individuals identified must be knowledgeable about the schools and school districts, the community agencies, the community, and the service-learning movement.

Incorporate the Key Components for Success

Whether the essential partners are from the private, public, or nonprofit sector, several key components can ensure successful partnerships:

- **Set common goals.** The students' service activities must meet the learning objectives defined by the teachers and the community needs defined by the partnering agency. Agency partners must understand the teachers' goals and objectives and share the responsibility of designing activities that enhance learning the subject matter. Likewise, teachers must understand the partnering agency's goals and mission and share the responsibility of giving students the opportunity to do real service. Ideally, the teacher and the community agency representative should design the service activity together.

High School Spanish III Students Provide Translation Services

In San Bernardino, high school students provided translation services for the local Head Start agency. Head Start had many pamphlets and monthly notices that needed to be translated into Spanish. Students in Spanish III class translated the materials as class assignments and exchanged them with classmates for peer editing. The assignments were turned in to the teacher who corrected them. One translation was selected for use. As a result, students provided a valuable service to Head Start while learning Spanish.

- **Clearly define roles and responsibilities.** Local schools, districts, and partners must clearly articulate their roles and responsibilities through written documentation, such as district-level policies, letters of support, contracts, or memoranda of understanding. These documents support the practice of shared responsibility between educators and community members.

- **Authorize staff to make things happen.** The commitment of time, resources, and expertise in collaborative relationships is critical, but it is often not enough to ensure successful activities. Managers of agencies and school administrators must give the authority to operate service activities to the people who are working with the students. If staff members at the school and the partnering agency are not authorized to make things happen efficiently, activities can be burdensome; and the objectives may not be achieved. Sometimes, as service-learning activities evolve, the direction may shift from the original mission, and the staff involved must be able to make decisions that will keep the activities moving forward in a timely manner.

- **Evaluate and make changes, if necessary.** It is not enough to collect data about hours spent on service activities and list the community

Service-Learning in the West Fresno School District

The Fresno Fire Department determined that many homes in the community, particularly those of low-income senior citizens, did not have working smoke detectors. However, the fire department was unsure how many homes were affected. Working with firemen and a local TV station, 38 sixth through eighth graders from the West Fresno School District addressed this community need.

In math class, students developed a survey to determine which seniors needed a smoke alarm; in science class they learned about the dangers of burns and smoke inhalation, particularly for senior citizens; and in language arts classes students wrote public service announcements and press releases. Then the firemen trained students about smoke detectors.

Students, accompanied by firemen, went door-to-door in their neighborhoods to survey residents about their knowledge of smoke detectors and to check for properly functioning smoke detectors. Students distributed the fire department literature on smoke detectors and, if a senior needed a smoke detector, one was provided. The community work by the students was recognized by the Fresno City Council, the West Fresno School District, Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission, Retired Senior Volunteer Program, and the Fresno Fire Department.

Students reflected on their activities in journals in language arts class and compiled a report about the project for the fire chief.

CalServe Renewal Application, 1998

Fresno County
Economic Opportunities Commission
1920 MARIPOSA MALL • FRESNO, CA 93721-2526 • (209) 263-1000
"People Helping People"

Dr. Emory Luck
Board Chairperson

Roger Palomino
Executive Director

May 20, 1998

Cal Serve Staff Members
California Department of Education - CalServe Initiative
721 Capitol Mall, Third Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Cal Serve Staff Members:

Partners Now Service Learning Project from the West Fresno School District has recently provided a very valuable service to the low-income senior volunteers in our Foster Grandparent Program. The simple actions of children and firemen working together, checking to make sure our seniors who live in the 93706 zip code area have properly functioning smoke detectors, is literally a positive step in preventing a life-threatening incident.

Our grandparents commit 20 hours of volunteering weekly with at-risk youth, providing unconditional love, positive role modeling/mentoring, and tutoring. Partners Now Service Learning Project has taken this intergenerational relationship full circle, demonstrating community collaboration where children have an opportunity to give back as well, along with the support of our fire department and West Fresno School District. This indeed is instilling healthy values in our children.

Thank you for including our Foster Grandparent volunteers as a part of your service project. It is my wish that this project will expand to all seniors in need throughout not only our county, but throughout the state and beyond.

Sincerely,

Victoria Langley

Victoria Langley, Program Director
Foster Grandparent Program

needs that were met. It is important to track each partner's performance in fulfilling responsibilities and to determine the impact of service-learning on the students and its long-term impact on the community. Although collecting this information is time-consuming, this process is critical in determining the service activities' value and the partnership's future direction (Lobman 1997, 92).

Identify the Local Partners

Formal education no longer occurs only within the school's walls. The community is also the classroom, and every sector of the community contributes to the education of our youth (Keith 1997, 140; Negroni 1995, 82). Potential partners are everywhere, including such places as local retirement homes, historical societies, fire departments, hospitals, colleges, or television stations, and such people as a landscape architect, a biologist with a local agency, a parent who studied art in college, other teachers, young men and women studying to be teachers, and senior citizen volunteers.

Most communities have agencies whose function is to facilitate the development of partnerships between schools and local community organizations or businesses. Local volunteer centers, the chamber of commerce, United Way chapters, and youth-oriented agencies are some of the primary networking resources.

Experts from the corporate community can provide valuable assistance to students as they plan, implement, and evaluate a service activity. These business people will often work alongside the students, coaching and encouraging them.

Work with National Service Providers

The Corporation for National Service, created in 1993, is a public-private partnership that oversees three national service initiatives, often called the "streams of service":

- **AmeriCorps,** which includes AmeriCorps* VISTA, AmeriCorps*National Civilian Community Corps, and hundreds of local and national nonprofit organizations

- **Learn and Serve America,** which provides models and assistance to help teachers integrate service and learning from kindergarten through college

- **National Senior Service Corps,** which includes the Foster Grandparents Program, the Senior Companions Program, and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)

California school districts may partner with local AmeriCorps programs, VISTA, and Senior Service Corps to leverage resources and implement service-learning. Trained AmeriCorps members can serve as the "point persons" to coordinate service-learning, or they can assist teachers or agency representatives as service projects are implemented.

For example, a school that offers an after-school tutorial and enrichment program may create a community partnership that uses AmeriCorps and VISTA members. These members might work closely with the teachers to coordinate in-school and after-school curricula and reflection activities so that selected learning objectives taught during school are reinforced through homework assistance and service experiences.

Stars After-School Program

In 1997 the Stars After-School program in Los Angeles selected the Constitutional Rights Foundation's *CityYouth* program for their service-learning club. *CityYouth*, designed originally as a classroom curriculum, uses service-learning as the learning strategy to teach lessons in the four core disciplines—history–social science, mathematics, language arts, and science. As an after-school club, *CityYouth* blends academic curriculum into a club atmosphere with adult volunteers coaching students as they address community needs through action projects. Stars students have created a campus garden, raised community awareness of endangered local historical buildings, and painted unused areas of the campus to create safe student gathering plazas.

Further Reading Related to This Recommendation

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